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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR-GM-62-7
June 1962

THE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

(Revision of CIA/RR GM-10, 8 October 1958)



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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THE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

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Since the evacuation of their remaining holdings off Chekiang Province early in 1955, the Nationalist position on the China coast has pivoted on a heavily fortified island and 13 others, only lightly defended, which fringe Taiwan Province. These offshore islands, in association with almost 50 uninhabited islets and numerous reefs, are distributed among two major aggregations: the Quemoy group, situated adjacent to the harbor of Amoy, and the Matsu complex, to the north, lying off the estuary of the Min Ching (river) and the port of Fouchow. Located midway between these two groups are the Wu-ch'ia islands, which are also in Nationalist hands but are of small extent and obvious significance.

The Quemoy group, by virtue of its size and position, constitutes the Nationalist presence in China. These islands have a land area of 76 square miles or 81 percent of the total offshore territory currently held by Nationalist China. About 66,800 troops are stationed on the islands in addition to the 17,000 civilian population -- 73 and 75 percent of the respective offshore totals. With regard to position, Quemoy and its satellite islets can hardly be termed "offshore" since they are situated squarely within the entrance to a 300-square-mile embayment wherein lies Taiwan (the Amoy Island). From this position, commanding the deepwater channel to Amoy Harbor, the Nationalists have been able to restrict the shipping of the coast-guarding port and have prevented it from being a mere bay.

Of the estimated 13,000 civilians on Quemoy, approximately 60 percent are farmers, who raise sweet potatoes, some small grains and vegetables, and high-grade poultry and hogs. Most of the remainder is engaged in offshore fishing. The civilian population is 50 to 60 percent self-sufficient in food, and additional supplies, especially rice, must be imported from Taiwan. Seasonal shortages of drinking water are also of some concern.

*Civilian population figures for the Offshore Islands are the same as those given in CIA/R 80-2, 8 October 1959, because later authoritative information is not available.

**All water distances mentioned in this report are expressed in terms of nautical miles. (1 nautical mile equals approximately 1.15 statute miles.)

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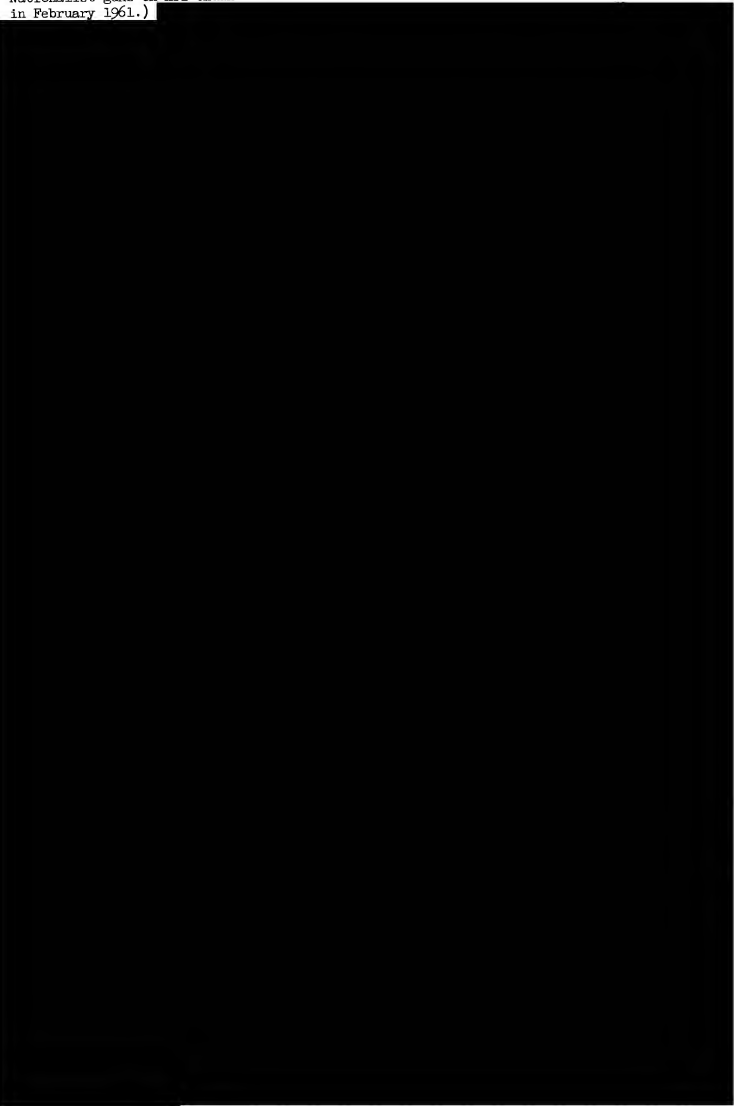
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be observed and intercepted. (Shelling of a Foochow-bound British merchant ship by Nationalist guns on Hsi-chuan Island in the Pai-ch'uan Lieh-tao group was reported in February 1961.)



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Project No. 61-2021

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26 June 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Printing and Services Division, OL

ATTENTION : [REDACTED] 25X1A

FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR

SUBJECT : Dissemination of CIA/RR GM 62-7, Revision
of CIA/RR GM-10, The Offshore Islands,
Secret/NOFORN

1. Subject publication is to be disseminated on a priority basis 27 June 1962.

2. You will receive 450 copies of GM 62-7 for distribution. These copies will commence with copy 51. Please make distribution as follows:

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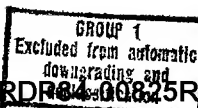
3. The Analysis Branch, Document Division, OCR, is advised of this dissemination by copy of this memorandum and will notify you promptly should any changes in the list be necessary. Accordingly, unless such notice is received, the dissemination requested should be followed.

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[REDACTED]
Acting Chief

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25 June 62 To Reproduction ; Due 27 June 62

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Geography Division, ORR

Project Initiation Memorandum

Project No.: 61.2021

Date: 22 June 1962

1. Subject of Proposed Project: The Offshore Islands
2. Statement of Problem: To update CIA/RR GM-10, The Offshore Islands, dated 8 October 1958, which evaluated the importance and defensibility of each of the Chinese Nationalist-held islands.
3. Requester: Self-initiated. 25X1A 25X1A
4. Responsible Analysts: Messrs. [REDACTED] (GG/F), [REDACTED] (GG/F), and [REDACTED] (ONE) 25X1A
5. Kind and Extent of Cooperation Desired From:
 - a. Other Divisions of the G Area: D/GC will update maps that were a part of CIA/RR GM-10.
 - b. Other Parts of CIA: Routine Agency facilities will be used.
6. Estimated Manhours in D/GG: 50
7. Probable Completion Date: 27 June 1962.
8. Probable Form of Final Publication: CIA/RR GM 62-7
9. Comments: Project placed on crash basis by direction of the DD/I. The Memorandum to be controlled NOFORN. A total of 500 copies to be printed (200 more than the standard distribution list).

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Chief, Geography Division

Approved:

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Chief, Geographic Research

Assistant Director, ORR

27 June 1962
Date

28 June 62
Date

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